

United States District Court
Western District of North Carolina



Courtroom Technology
Attorney Reference Guide

Updated 2/14/08

A Message from the I.T. Department

The Western North Carolina District of the United States Federal Court is composed of four divisional offices located in Charlotte, Asheville, Statesville and Bryson City, North Carolina. There are seven courtrooms within the district. Two of the courtrooms are magistrate.

The goal of the Information Technology Staff of the Western North Carolina District is to provide state-of-the art technology for evidence presentation in the courtroom. As technology changes, challenges to our existing setup arise; however, our ambition is to continually improve technology until conversion between attorney evidence, courtroom equipment, and jury presentation is seamless.

This guide is a general overview of the courtroom equipment available for usage in the Western North Carolina District. Some basic orientations and instructions are also provided. This guide is not a substitute for receiving formal training on the usage of courtroom equipment. Unfortunately, instruction can not be provided on the day of the proceeding by either the courtroom or clerks office staff. It is recommended that you schedule hands-on training well in advance of your proceeding. You can register on-line at <http://www.ncwd.uscourts.gov/Requests/EquipmentRequest.aspx>. For additional questions, contact the Clerk's office at (704)350-7400.

We look forward to you practicing in our district.

I.T. Department Staff

Table of Contents

Available Equipment.....	4
Evidence Display.....	5
Document Camera.....	9
Annotation Monitor.....	10
VCR/DVD Player.....	11
Laptop Inputs	
Connecting your laptop to the Evidence Display.....	12
Connecting to the Internet.....	13
Connecting to Audio.....	14
Microphones.....	15
Jury Boxes.....	16
Witness Stand.....	17
Charlotte Courtroom 2.....	18
VGA(Video) Printing.....	22
Teleconferencing.....	22
Video Conferencing.....	22
Attorney Responsibilities.....	23

Overview of Available Equipment

The following equipment is available in all courtrooms within the District. Within most courtrooms, the evidence presentation cart or podium will contain the document camera, annotation monitor, VCR/DVD players, and laptop inputs. All the courtrooms are equipped with LCD monitors for jury viewing, interactive evidence display equipment, and microphones. We are in the process of upgrading our evidence display system. Charlotte Courtroom 2 has been equipped with the new display software, hardware and integrated sound system. Instead of a centralized cart, this courtroom has evidence presentation equipment for use at each attorney's table. Although, the model of the equipment may vary but overall equipment operation is the same.

Courtrooms	Document Camera	Annotation Monitor	VGA Printing	VCR/DVD	Jury Monitors	Attorney Internet	Microphones	Touch Display	ISDN Video Conference	Teleconference
Asheville	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Asheville Mag	x	x		x	x		x	x		
Bryson City	x			x	x	x	x	x		
Charlotte CR 1**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Charlotte CR 2*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Charlotte CR 3	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Charlotte Mag	x	x		x	x		x	x		
Statesville **	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		

*This courtroom serves as the model for future courtroom upgrades on the district. It has updated evidence display and integrated sound equipment

**Courtroom Upgrades scheduled. Technology standardized to the model. Completion in 2008.

Evidence Display

The Evidence Display system has become the control center of all technology within the court. From one panel, you can control all video and audio through the courtroom. Our courts have one controller at the podium, one per attorney table(if applicable to the courtroom), the courtroom deputy's bench and the judge's bench.

To activate the initial startup display: touch the darkened screen, touch the Court Seal or touch where it says "Touch Here to Begin"

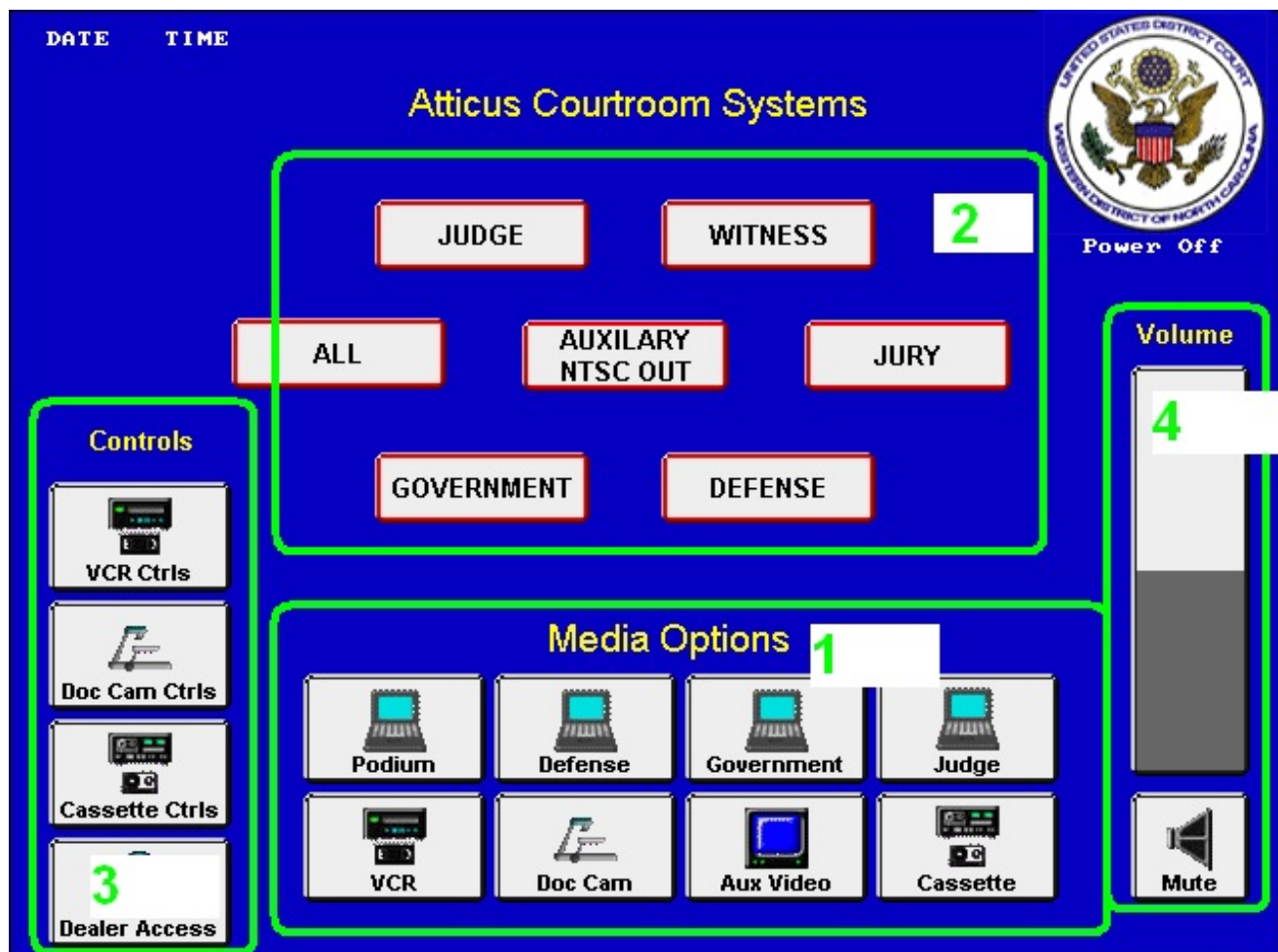


Startup Screen

Note: The judge and courtroom deputy have master control panels. The courtroom deputy powers the system on and off. They control the volume of the microphones within the courtroom. If need be, they can disable and mute any activity from your panel. The judge can execute these actions as well

The Evidence Display panel (Figure 1) can be broken into four main areas:

1. **Media Options:** Source of the Information
2. **Display Area:** Who will see the information
3. **Controls:** Contains the settings of the external devices.
Normally you do **not** change these settings
4. **Volume:** Controls the volume of audio being played



STEP 1: Connect your laptop to the system using the VGA cable. The laptop can be connected using the cables at the attorney's table or the podium (if applicable)

STEP2: Select the device under Media Options that contains the evidence to be displayed to the court. When selecting, VCR, Doc Cam, or Cassette the item will be automatically powered on.

Option	When to Choose
Podium	Laptop is connected at the podium
Defense	Laptop is connected at the Defense Table
Government	Laptop is connected at the US Attorney's table
Judge	Not used by Attorneys
VCR	Evidence presented from VCR or DVD . Select VCR or DVD on the next screen
Doc Cam	Evidence is displayed on the document camera
Aux Video	Other video needs to be shown--infrequently used
Cassette	Evidence on a cassette tape

Not all courtrooms have cassettes or auxiliary video connections

STEP3: Select who needs to see the evidence.

Who	When to Choose
All	All display devices in the court
Defense	Defense monitors only
Government	US Attorney monitors only
Judge	Judge monitor only
Witness	Witness monitor only
Jury	Jury monitors only
Auxiliary NTSC	Other video device only

Some courtrooms have Podium instead of Auxiliary NTSC

Note: There are two LCD monitors located on each attorney table. For larger trials, additional monitors can be added. Please request additional equipment at least a week prior to the trial so feasibility can be accessed.

STEP4: Control the evidence being presented

4a. Increase or decrease volume using your finger and the slide rule for audio evidence.

4b. Fast Forward, Rewind, Stop evidence presented using VCR, DVD, or Cassette panel you selected in **STEP2**



Document Camera



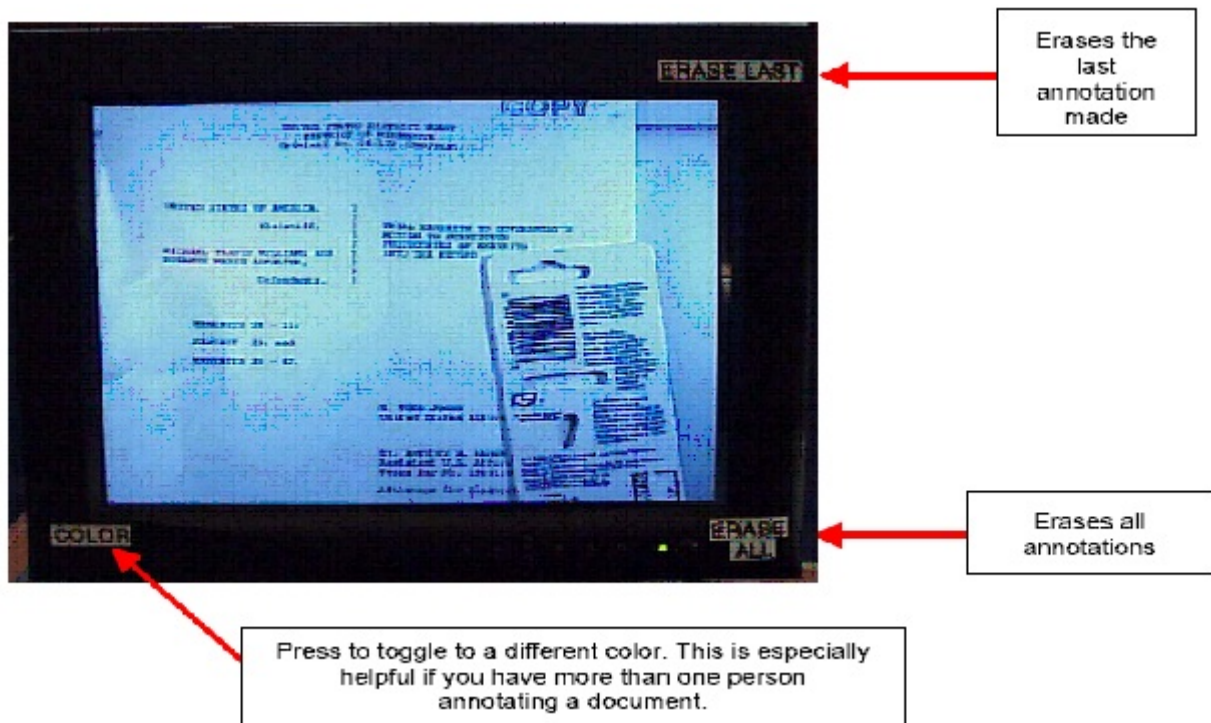
Document Cameras are available in each courtroom. The camera allows counsel to present evidence through video monitors. The evidence displayed can be of any medium including 3-D objects. The standard document camera is the Wolfvision VZ8 or Samsung Digital Presenter. All settings on the camera have been calibrated.

The camera has many features; however, the ones you should be familiar with are:

Button	Feature
Power	Powers the camera on or off. The camera should be turned on using the Evidence Display equipment but if not, press this button.
Freeze	Used primarily when switching objects. The last image on the camera is frozen until a new item is loaded. Hold down button until message "Freeze On" appears on the screen.
Zoom	Allows an item to appear closer (+) or farther away (-)
Focus	Cameras are set to autofocus; however you can manually adjust the image to appear sharper or more blurry.

Annotation Monitors

A minimum of two annotation monitors are available for use in each courtroom (one at the witness stand and at least one for counsel at the podium or at their table). The monitors are touch screen LCD panels that allow visual annotations on exhibits or can be used as chalkboards permitting freehand drawings. Each monitor is equipped with multiple color markings, clear the last annotation or clear all annotations.



- Use your **fingers** to draw lines, circles and other markings that emphasize items displayed on the monitor. This cannot be used to "highlight" text. It is not a fine line and requires practice.
- Each monitor will be marked for '**color**', '**clear all**', '**clear last**'. Gently tap the appropriately marked corner for the corresponding action.
- To change the annotation color, tap the corner until the desired color appears.

Note: Annotation monitors are not currently available in Bryson City

DVD/ and VCR Players

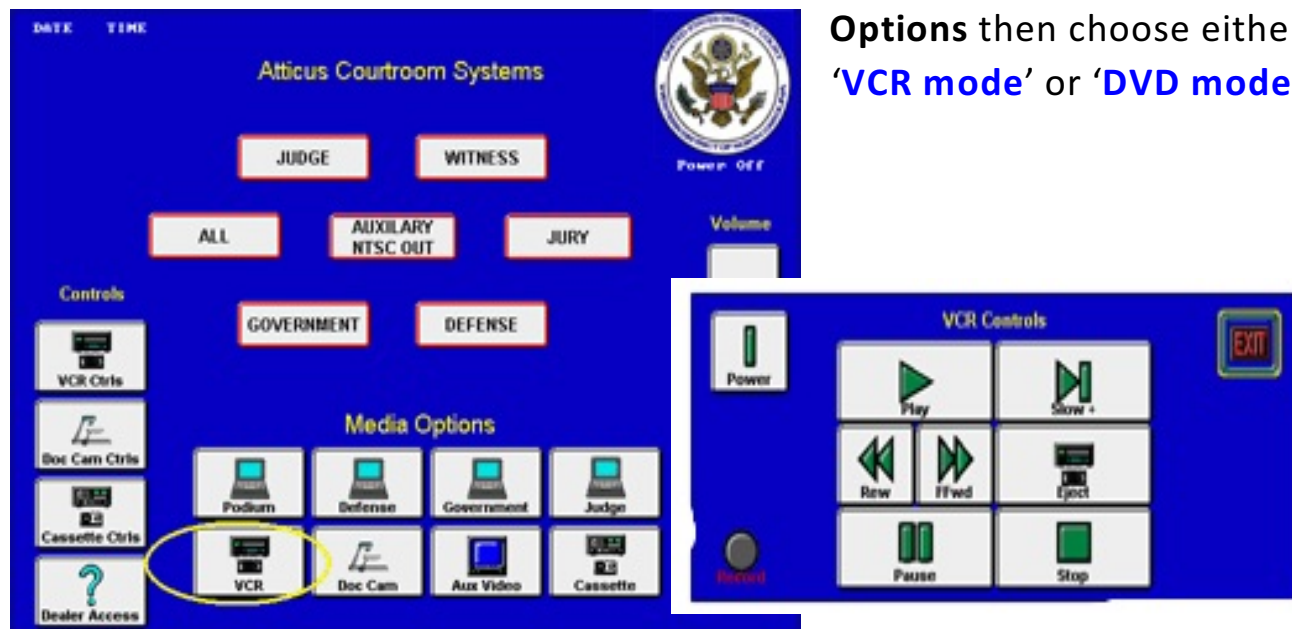


At least one DVD and VCR player is assigned to each courtroom. The standard is a Sony DVD/VCR Combo . The device allows a DVD or videotape to be played throughout the courtroom. It is recommended that you test your media prior to the start of court. The player is located in the cart beneath the document camera.

Using the DVD\VCR Player

The DVD\VCR player is controlled through the Evidence Display Touch Panel. In most courtrooms, the display will look like the following picture. You

select '**VCR**' under **Media Options** then choose either '**VCR mode**' or '**DVD mode**'



Note: When the “VCR” button is pressed, the transport controls (rewind, play, pause, etc.) operate only the VCR. When the “DVD” button is pressed, the transport controls operate only the DVD.

Laptop Inputs

VGA Connection

VGA cables are available to connect your laptop into the evidence presentation system. At least one connection is available per counsel table and a connection at the podium



Note: Connect the VGA cable to your laptop **before** powering the machine on. Otherwise, you may have to toggle the video sources to recognize the output to your laptop.

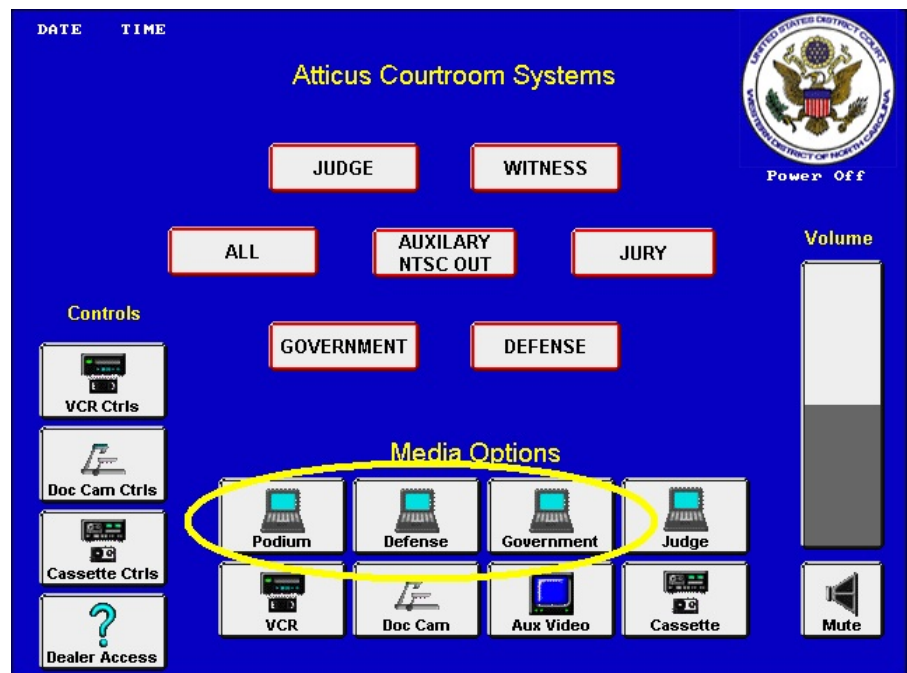
To display your laptop screen throughout the court select either:

Podium

Defense

Government

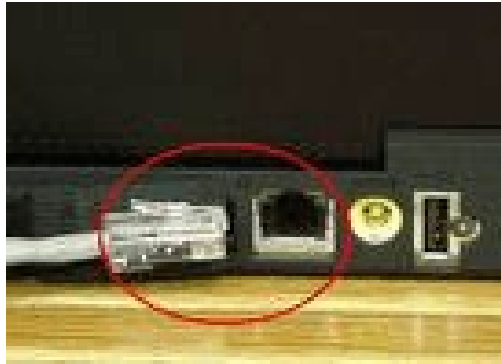
under **Media Options**
(depending upon your location in the courtroom).



Laptop Inputs

Ethernet Connection

Internet access is available in the courtrooms. For your convenience, ethernet cables are located at the attorney tables. Connect the cable to your laptop to establish connectivity with the Internet.



Wireless internet connectivity is available in most courtrooms. Look for “[AttorneyAccess](#)” in your list of available wireless networks.

Note: In Asheville, the wireless network is named “[Bar_AP_1](#)”

Laptop Inputs

Audio Connection

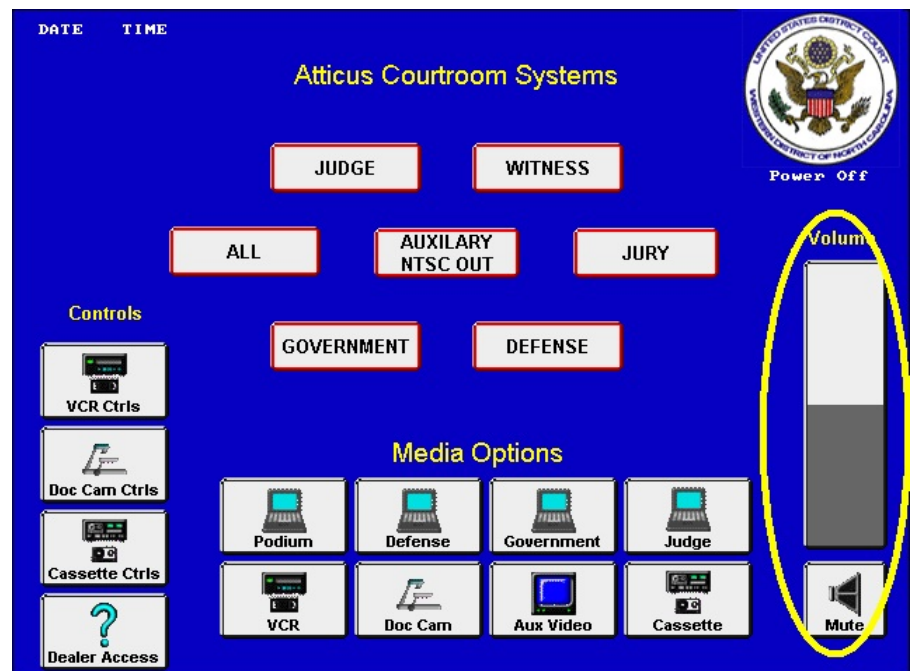
Audio cables are available to connect your laptop into the evidence presentation system. At least one connection is available per counsel table and a connection at the podium



Note: If you do not hear sound after making the connection, ensure the cable is connected to the headphone jack and not the microphone

To control the volume, when playing audio from your laptop, raise and lower the bar on the right side of the evidence display panel using your finger.

If you do not want volume, press the **MUTE** button



Microphones



Attorney tables are equipped with at least two table microphones. Microphones are also located at the podium(if applicable to your courtroom), witness area and judge's bench. Speakers are strategically placed throughout the courtroom to broadcast what is spoken into the microphones.

Courtroom Deputies control microphone volume.

Note: Some courtrooms contain microphones with 'manual' mute buttons. You must press and continually hold the button to mute the microphone in all speakers. The upgraded courtrooms contain *Shure* microphones. You select the button labeled "Push" on the microphone's base and that item is muted (green light is turned off). Without muting the microphones, your voice could be picked up by the sound and/or recording systems.

Jury Boxes



Eight flat screens are located in the jury box for jurors to view evidence during a trial. To display the presented evidence on the juror screens, select

from the evidence display main screen.

WITNESS

Witness Stand

The witness stand is equipped with a microphone and an annotation monitor. To display the presented evidence to the witness, select

from the evidence display main screen. If the witness inputs annotations, they will automatically display on the selected viewable screens.



Charlotte Courtroom 2



Charlotte Courtroom 2 is the 'model' courtroom in the district. The standards implemented in this courtroom will be duplicated in the subsequent courtrooms. During 2007, the courtroom's evidence display

equipment was upgraded. The courtroom deputy can control all aspects of the evidence display system from a single panel. Instead of a centralized cart, this courtroom has a set of 'standard' equipment per attorney's table. Each counsel table is equipped with two monitors, laptop connections, audio connections, two microphones, DVD\VCR player, annotation monitor and an evidence camera. There are touch panels for the presentation display equipment located at counsel tables, the clerk's bench and judges' bench. An annotation monitor is also available at the witness stand. Jury monitors are present in the courtroom. The evidence display system looks differently but behaves in the same manner as the district's other systems.

Note: Charlotte courtroom 1 and the Statesville courtroom will be upgraded in 2008.

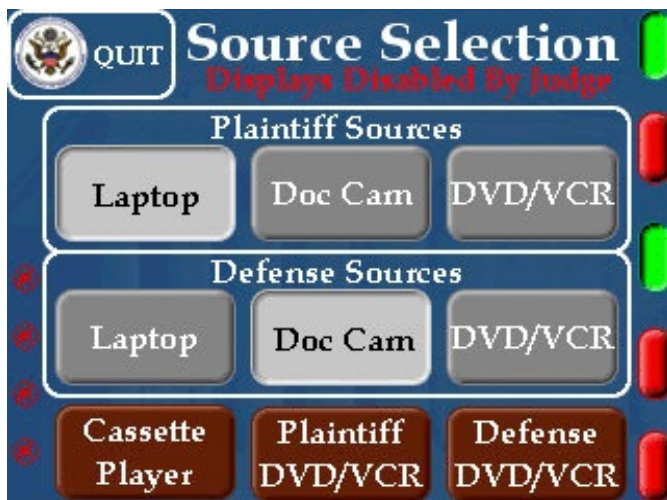
Courtroom 2 Evidence Display



Below is the Courtroom Deputy's startup screen for the evidence display system in Charlotte's courtroom 2. This system must be turned on by the courtroom deputy.

Startup Screen

Below is a screenshot of the Courtroom Deputy's main panel. Note the message in **red**. The Judge has the ability to disable all displays.



Using the System

STEP 1: Connect your laptop to the system using the VGA cable at the attorney's table.

STEP2: Gently touch the darkened screen to make it active. Select the device to be used as the media source. When selecting, DVD/VCR, Doc Cam, or Cassette the item will be automatically powered on.



Main Screen

NOTE: The main screen has been simplified. It only contains your sources of evidence: [Laptop](#), [Doc Cam](#) and [DVD/VCR](#).

Other options have been moved to buttons on the display device.

STEP3: Select who needs to see the evidence.

You control who will see the evidence by clicking the buttons on the outside of the panel. The lights on the main panel correspond with the buttons on the main display.



= Enabled = Disabled



As with the previous system, you can choose **ALL, WITNESS, JUDGE, JURY, DEFENSE\ PLAINTIFF**

STEP4: Control the evidence being presented

4a. Mute or unmute sound for audio evidence using the buttons on the left hand side of the display panel.

4b. Fast Forward, Rewind, Stop evidence presented using VCR, DVD, or Cassette

panel you selected in **STEP2**



VGA Printing

The color video printer allows printing of a digital picture of the currently selected video source, including any annotations made. Anything viewed on the courtroom monitors can be turned into hard copy for evidence purposes.

The printer is located near the courtroom deputy and must be activated by the courtroom deputy or judge.

NOTE: This option is only available in Charlotte Courtroom 1 and Courtroom 2.

Teleconference

Teleconferencing equipment is available in the Asheville courtroom and Charlotte courtrooms 1,2 and 3. Contact the Clerk's office for additional information.

Video Conference

The Western District of North Carolina has ISDN video conferencing systems available for use in the Asheville and Charlotte divisional offices.

The Judge handling the proceeding must agree to allow witnesses or other appearances by the way of video conferencing. Advance scheduling and notice are required. Scheduling priority is given to matters pending in the Western District; however, the video conferencing equipment may be

available to other Courts depending upon availability and proper authorization.

To request use of this equipment, please contact the Clerk's office at least one week prior to your intended use of the video conferencing equipment.

Sufficient time is needed to perform at least one test call and check compatibility with equipment at the other site.

Attorney Responsibilities

It can not be stressed enough the importance of testing your laptop and other equipment prior to your court appearance. You can register for hands-on training at

<http://www.ncwd.uscourts.gov/Requests/EquipmentRequest.aspx>. For additional training questions, contact the Clerk's office at (704)350-7400.

- The only laptop requirement is a screen resolution of 1024 x 768. Using other resolutions have caused calibration issues in the past.
- Connect your laptop using the VGA cable before powering the laptop up. Otherwise you may need to toggle video sources.
- Avoid creating media evidence (such as a DVD or CD) that require proprietary software or saved in unusual format. This may hinder jury access to the material.

Again **TEST** the compatibility of your computer equipment and evidence prior to your appearance in court. Is the audio clear or loud enough to be heard throughout the court? Or will you require the use of external speakers? Will your CD or DVD play through the evidence display equipment? Or do you need to recreate the evidence in another format? Resolving these type of issues beforehand will ensure a speedy and technically efficient trial for all parties.